

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9960

S E C R E T PARIS 14541

FOR THE SECRETARY

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: YOUR MEETING IN OTTAWA WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
SAUVAGNARGUES

1. THANKS TO MARTY HILLENBRAND, YOU ALREADY HAVE A THOROUGH AND INCISIVE EVALUATION OF SAUVAGNARGUES, AS MAN AND DIPLOMAT. NEVERTHELESS, WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO SUBMIT A FEW ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS BASED ON WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD SINCE HE ASSUMED HIS NEW DUTIES AS FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. DESPITE HIS PROFESSIONAL ATTAINMENTS AS DIPLOMATIST AND SCHOLARLY GERMANIST, SAUVAGNARGUES REMAINS REMARKABLY DIRECT AND UNPRETENTIOUS. YOU WILL NOT BE TREATED TO THE BEGUILING METAPHORS AND ILLUSIONS AND IRONIC WIT THAT HIS PREDECESSOR WAS FOND OF USING.

3. AS A RESULT OF PRIVILEGED CONVERSATIONS IN RECENT DAYS, WE ARE TOLD THAT SAUVAGNARGUES BELIEVES THAT MANY OF THE RECENT US-FRENCH PROBLEMS WERE ARTIFICIAL. HE IS PREDISPOSED, THEREFORE, TO IGNORE THESE AND TO TRY TO ESTABLISH A DIRECT, PRODUCTIVE AND ABOVE ALL COURTEOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. HE MEANS IT WHEN HE SAYS THAT FRANCE'S RELATIONS WITH ITS OLD ALLY, THE UNITED STATES, SHOULD BE COMPLETELY NORMAL AND FRUITFUL.

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HE ALSO MEANS IT WHEN HE STRESSES THE NOTION OF

EQUALITY IN THIS RELATIONSHIP.

4. WE WOULD ADD ONE NOTE OF CAUTION: SAUVAGNARGUES AND GISCARD ARE PROBABLY MORE DISPOSED TO WORK WITH THE UNITED STATES THAN ANY COMBINATION OF PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER SINCE THE FOURTH REPUBLIC. THE OPPOSITION, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, ALSO KNOW THIS. THEY ARE JUST WAITING FOR A "FALSE MOVE" (I.E., COMPROMISE OF "FRENCH PRINCIPLES") ON THE PART OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES. THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY IF IT APPEARS THAT FRENCH LEADERS ARE SEEKING TO CURRY FAVOR WITH OR ARE GIVING IN ON IMPORTANT ISSUES TO THE UNITED STATES. THUS, FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT IN THE COMING MONTHS TO HANDLE OUR RELATIONS WITH SAUVAGNARGUES AND GISCARD WITH RESTRAINT AND UNDERSTANDING.

IRWIN

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